



RIDOT POLICY

DATE: December 10, 2003

REFERENCE: Use of State Vehicles

Policy Statement:

This policy is intended to insure that the use of state-owned vehicles by employees complies with applicable laws and regulations; in particular Chapter 42-11.3 of the Rhode Island General Laws as amended and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

The policy addresses criteria for assignment of vehicles, instructions for usage, vehicle maintenance, state vehicles involved in accidents, vehicle inspection, misuse of state vehicles, out of state use of state vehicles, etc.

I direct that each and every DOT employee that is assigned or has a need to operate a state vehicle take the time necessary to read the Fleet Operations Procedure Manual, so that there is no question of what is expected when assigned/operating a state vehicle.

James R. Capaldi, PE
Director of Transportation

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



FLEET OPERATIONS PROCEDURES

***RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FLEET OPERATIONS PROCEDURES***

1. **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Leased vehicles will be assigned to specific sections by administrative support, according to the needs and requirements of the Department. These vehicles will be charged to Federal-Aid projects only and will not be loaned to any other state agency, unless otherwise directed by the Governor. When a project is 100% state finances, the supervisor will insure that the employee is provided with an administrative vehicle.

2. **INSTRUCTIONS FOR USAGE:**

- A. Each vehicle will be assigned to a responsible individual who will insure that the vehicle is operated and maintained according to current procedures. The assignment made by administrative support will be recorded on a "Vehicle Assignment Control" form (Attachment 1). The individual assigned the state vehicle must possess a valid operator's license to operate the type of vehicle assigned.
- B. Any vehicle not in use due to vacation, illness of three (3) days or more, or other absence, must be made available to other employees who may use it to conduct state business. No vehicle should sit idle at an Employee's residence because of that employee's absence from work.
- C. Leased motor vehicles will be maintained according to listed procedures.
- D. Use of all vehicles will be recorded on Form Number SSF-9, "Semi-Monthly State Vehicle Usage Sheet" (Attachment 2). This form must be filled out by the assigned driver, certified as correct by his/her immediate supervisor on a weekly basis. Drivers not assigned vehicles will be required to fill out reverse side SSF-9 and carry totals to front of form.
- E. Accidents involving state vehicles must be reported to the police immediately along with immediate notification to the Office of Fleet Operations. Drivers are also required to submit a copy of the accident report to the Office of Fleet Operations within twenty-four (24) hours.
- F. The assigned driver will be issued a "fuel card" (Fuel A Card Terminal System) for fueling purposes at official state fueling facilities. If this card is lost, stolen, or damaged, the driver must immediately contact the office of Fleet Operations and report its demise and request a replacement (see Attachment 3 for fueling terminals).

- G. The office of Fleet Operations will conduct periodic reviews to insure compliance with maintenance schedules established by the Department in accordance with the Vehicle Handbook (revision1) and the manufacturer.

H. Driver Conduct

Any assigned driver or state employee operating a state vehicle must exercise prudence and extreme caution while operating said vehicle. Drivers are to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times when operating the vehicle assigned to them. Drivers of state vehicles shall avoid engaging in any inappropriate conduct while operating a state vehicle. Operating a state vehicle in an inappropriate or discourteous manner, or for illegal activity, shall not be tolerated and may result in the suspension or revocation of the driver's state vehicle operating privileges, as well as disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3. **VEHICLE MAINTENANCE:**

All vehicles must be maintained and serviced in accordance with the service manual provided by the manufacturer and the information included in this section. The assigned driver will be responsible for maintaining the vehicle in good mechanical and aesthetic condition.

- A. An up-to-date record of all service and repair will be maintained on the Vehicle Maintenance Chart (Attachment 4). This service and maintenance record will reflect all scheduled and unscheduled service required or the vehicle (under warranty and other)and will be kept in the vehicle at all times as part of the provided handbook.
- B. When any type of service or repair (including transceiver removal and re-installation) is required, the assigned driver must take the following steps.
 - 1. Contact the office of Fleet Operations at 222-4201, ext. 4326 and provide the following information
 - A. Driver's name.
 - B. Vehicle Registration Number.
 - C. Approved Vendor who will provide the service.
 - D. Specific type of service or repair.
 - E. Location of vehicle, if emergency.
 - F. Odometer Reading
 - G. Driver's office telephone number.
 - H. Information as to whether this is a reoccurring problem.

C. For routine maintenance, the assigned driver will:

1. Obtain the necessary paperwork at the office of Fleet Operations and call the approved vendor for an appointment.
2. Coordinate with the office of Fleet Operations getting the vehicle to the approved vendor. The towing of any vehicle must also be coordinated through the office of Fleet Operations. The vendor must be provided with the white copy of the purchase order before they can begin work on the vehicle. The vendor will require the driver to sign a work order form but not before service is performed.
3. Insure that specific repairs have to the best of a drivers knowledge, been properly performed. The driver must then submit to the Office of Fleet Operations, the pink "Proof of Service" form (Attachment 5).
4. any problems with vendors not performing work properly, must be reported by the driver to the office of Fleet Operations on the "Proof of Service" form.

NOTE: Under no circumstances will the white copy of the Purchase Order be altered in any way. Additional work must be accompanied by separate Purchase Order following the above outlined steps.

- D. Any damage to the vehicle must be reported to the office of Fleet Operations immediately, no matter how minor. An accident report will immediately follow.
- E. If any vehicle requires an excessive amount of time to be repaired (three/four days), the driver must contact the office of Fleet Operations immediately for assistance in expediting the repairs. Be reminded to state the specific problem(s) with the vehicle.
- F. The assigned driver will have his/her vehicle inspected by an approved vendor (two years from delivery) and have a state inspection sticker affixed. This will be repeated on a yearly basis. State vehicle registrations are valid indefinitely as per order of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and therefore do not require license plate stickers (per National Telex Message 1/7/85 by R.M.V.).
- G. Drivers will be responsible for proper winterization service of their vehicles by approved vendors (see Reverse Flush Schedule in the Service Handbook checklist).

- H. Replacement of tires will be coordinated through the office of Fleet Operations (problems outside the norm with tires will also be reported to Fleet Operations).
- I. State Vehicles are to be utilized only to conduct official State business, and within the scope of the operator's employment/authority. No State vehicle may be retained by an employee beyond the normal working hours of the employee or agency other than those assigned for 24 hour call or commuting purposes.
 - 1. Personal use of a State vehicle for social, recreational, religious, *educational or any other such purpose, whether on duty or off is not permitted (*educational use may be permitted during working hours with prior approval)
 - 2. State vehicles may not be driven by anyone other than an employee of the State.
 - 3. Reporting of parking fines or other violations, charges, and payment thereof must be made to the office of Fleet Operations. All such fines and charges are to be paid promptly at the time they are incurred and are the sole responsibility of the vehicle's driver.
 - 4. The willful neglect or misuse of any State owned vehicle is sufficient cause for dismissal, and such misuse or false statements about the use of said vehicles may subject the employee to civil action.
 - 5. State agencies have the responsibility to periodically review the accident records of employees while driving state-owned motor vehicles, for the purpose of identifying any unusual patterns and trends that may be occurring that could lead to a vehicle being recalled and reassigned if warranted.

6. The RIDOT shall investigate all misuse complaints received. The RIDOT must report to the office of state Fleet Operations verbally within two business days and in writing within ten business days from the date a complaint was reported. This report shall contain a minimum:
 - name, address and telephone number of complainant, if known;
 - summary of complaint;
 - name and address of driver;
 - investigation findings;
 - remedial action taken, if warranted;
 - response to complainant, if warranted;
7. The RIDOT may take appropriate disciplinary action for a violation of these rules or for otherwise engaging in unsafe practices with a state-owned motor vehicle.
8. Violations of any specific statute, regulation and/or policy governing the use of a state-owned motor vehicle may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension or revocation of authority to operate a state-owned motor vehicle.
9. The willful neglect or misuse of any state-owned motor vehicle shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action and such misuse or false statements about the use of said vehicle(s) may subject the employee to civil or criminal penalties.
10. If a state-owned motor vehicle sustains damage or is involved in an accident as a result of an employee's own negligent and willful or wanton misconduct, the RIDOT, with the approval of the office of state Fleet Operations, may assess the responsible party for the property damage to the state vehicle.
11. The RIDOT must notify the office of state Fleet Operations if action taken by the agency affects the ability of an employee to operate a state-owned motor vehicle.
12. Assigned drivers or operators are responsible for ensuring that fluid levels are regularly checked and fluids added when low (engine oil, transmission fluid, radiator coolant and window washer fluid).

13. Every employee who operates a state-owned motor vehicle is required to report suspension or revocation of his/her license to the office of Fleet Operations and State Fleet Operations. Failure of an employee to report any change in license status may result in disciplinary action.
14. Operating a state-owned motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.
15. Operators must observe all traffic laws, including but not limited to the following:
 - Speeds must be kept within the limits which are reasonable prudent for the existing driving conditions.
 - Operators along with their passengers must wear safety belts.
16. Operators shall not allow any unauthorized person to drive a state-owned motor vehicle.
17. Smoking is prohibited in state-owned motor vehicles.
18. Before operating a state-owned motor vehicle, the operator is responsible for checking that the vehicle is in good operating condition and that all necessary safety equipment and control devices are in good condition before the vehicle is operated. If the operator has any concerns about the safety or operation of the vehicle, their concerns should be reported to the office of Fleet Operations.
19. When driving within the state, operators must obtain fuel from fuel depots owned or approved by the office of state Fleet Operations. A list of the fueling depots may be obtained from the office of Fleet Operations.
20. For driving out of state, operators may obtain a gasoline credit card from the office of Fleet Operations. This card must be returned to the office of Fleet Operations within two business days of returning to the state.

21. Use of state-owned motor vehicles:

- State agencies and employees must comply with the usage requirements as established within RIGL Chapter 42-11.3 and the Department of Administration's Policy entitled "Motor Vehicles Owned by a Governmental Body", adopted on October 1, 2000 and attached hereto.
- State-owned motor vehicles shall be stored at sites owned, leased or controlled by the state unless the vehicle is used for commuting. State-owned motor vehicles shall be parked off the public street in a reasonable secure setting when used during business hours or when taken home by a commuter.
- Personal use of a state-owned motor vehicle by an authorized employee is allowable, but only if the use is de minimus.
- De minimus use pertains to the incidental personal use of a state-owned motor vehicle during the operators travel on state business; eg. Stopping briefly at a bank for personal reasons that is on the route of travel to or from work. Under Internal Revenue Service regulations de minimus means "the value is so small as to make the accounting for it unreasonable or administratively impractical."
- State-owned motor vehicles may not be driven by anyone other than an employee of the state. However, individuals such as volunteers, interns, students or contracted workers may, with the approval of the agency's director or appointing authority, drive a state-owned motor vehicle in furtherance or official state business.
- State-owned motor vehicles may not be loaned, leased or rented to any person, organization, business or other governmental jurisdiction except when deemed necessary in a state of emergency or natural disaster.

22. Vehicles having confidential plates must keep the non-confidential state plate in the trunk of the vehicle.

23. Displays: Each state owned motor vehicle shall display a decal on the rear window. Said decal shall state: "PLEASE REPORT MISUSE" and the telephone number established for such reporting. Unmarked law enforcement vehicles and the directors of various state departments are exempt from this requirement pursuant to RIGL Section 2-11.3-3. See October 2000 policy attached as Appendix A.
24. Markings: No equipment, decoration or advertisement shall be affixed to a state-owned motor vehicle without prior written approval from the office of State Fleet Operations.
25. Pool Vehicles
 - A. State vehicles fall into two categories: those designated as pool vehicles and those designated as personally-assigned vehicles. Pool vehicles also fall into two categories: Agency pool vehicles and DOA (Central Fleet) pool vehicles. Personal assignment of vehicles to individuals may be on an annual basis when not in conflict with collective bargaining agreements. Vehicles may be reallocated from personally-assigned status to agency pool status at any time, based on agency needs.
 - B. Pool vehicles are reserved and issued to drivers by an agency dispatcher. A record must be made of each pool vehicle trip with beginning and ending mileage noted.
 - C. If a pool vehicle is not available and the driver is authorized to use his/her own personal vehicle, reimbursement for business miles will be at a rate established by DOA ("the lower rate"), or the amount specified by a union contract.

VEHICLE CHECKLIST

A ten minute check each week can keep you in touch with the condition of your assigned State Vehicle and its upcoming maintenance requirements.

Engine Oil: Before starting engine, observe oil level on the dipstick. If found to be low, replenish immediately. If dirty and gritty (feel it), have oil and filter changed as soon as possible as per previous instructions. Also, check the ground regularly for any possible leaks.

Engine Coolant: Before starting the engine, check level of coolant in the overflow tank. There should be some coolant, but it should be low enough to allow for expansion. If no overflow tank, remove radiator cap (only when engine is cold). Coolant should cover the top of the radiator core (coolant is available at the Office of Fleet Operations). Also, have coolant checked **each fall** for proper freeze protection. This could be accomplished during a regular oil and lube service.

Check tire inflation, including the spare. If any tire consistently registers low, inspect it and its valves for leaks. Low tires can affect safe handling. Also inspect the tread for uneven wear patterns that can indicate unbalanced wheels or front-suspension maladjustment. Look for cuts and bruises on the sidewalls that also may be danger signals.

Battery, terminals and cables should be clean and tight. Coating terminals with petroleum jelly will protect them from dirt. If you remove caps or covers to check fluid, first dust off the battery so dirt will not get inside.

Check belts, hoses and clamps for tightness, signs of wear or leaks.

Check the windshield washer fluid.

Check the brake and power-steering fluids (exact location is detailed in the owner's manual).

Check all lights. With the possible exception of the brake lights, this task can be accomplished by one person in thirty (30) seconds.

Windshield Wipers: Check each blade for fraying. Check their operation briefly. If replacement blades are required, contact the Office of Fleet Operations.

When starting the vehicle, observe the warning lights to ensure that all go out following a brief illumination (which show that they are in working order).

REMINDERS

Is the vehicle maintenance record in this book up-to-date? Remember, this book **must** be kept in your vehicle.

Are you due for an inspection sticker? After 2 months or 25,000 miles from the date of purchase and every year thereafter.

Have your brakes been inspected? Replaced if required? Do you have proof of service?

Does your vehicle need body work? If so, have you initiated procedures and followed through on them? Have you submitted the pink proof of service sheet to the office of Fleet Operations?

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Service your **new** vehicle at 1,500 miles.

Schedule regular service oil, lube and filter, etc., every 2,500 miles thereafter or every 3 months.

Tune-up every 25,000 miles, as needed.

Transmission service every 25,000 miles.

Brake check and possible replacement at 20,000 to 25,000 miles.

Radiator back flush and renew coolant once a year, preferably in the Fall.

Rotation of tires at 5,000 miles and every 5,000 miles thereafter.

Additive to fuel system every month for fuel injectors.

Remember to fill out “Proof of Service” Pink Sheets at the Vendor’s after work is completed on the vehicle, and also the invoice.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vehicle Assignment Control Form
2. Weekly State Vehicle Usage Sheet
3. List of Fuel Terminals
4. Vehicle Maintenance Chart
5. Proof of Service Form

Revised 6/08